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## THE SPANISH PROSE TRISTRAM SOURCE QUESTION

Almost simultaneously with my recent attempt to indicate an Italian origin for the Old Spanish romance of chivalry *Tristán de Leontís* and the still older *Cuento de Tristán*, preserved in the Vatican library, Señor Bonilla y San Martín brought out a new edition of the first-named work.<sup>1</sup> Inasmuch as the views expressed by Bonilla in his Introduction to this work are so different from my own results, I desire to reply to them and to indicate wherein it seems to me they are erroneous.

After having edited the third edition of the *Tristán de Leontís*, that of Juan Cromberger, Sevilla, 1528,<sup>2</sup> Bonilla now gives to the world the *editio princeps* of the same romance, reproducing the British Museum's unique exemplar of Juan de Burgos' edition, published in Valladolid, 1501. The text is more antiquated than that of the previously published third edition, and differs from it to a marked degree. The book is a sumptuous, even a luxurious, specimen of the printer's art. The text is illustrated with an introduction, notes, appendix, and alphabetical index of proper names.

In the first chapter of his Introduction, Bonilla does not profess to do more than give a convenient résumé of the work of Bédier, Golther, Röttiger, Jessie L. Weston, and others. Arthurian scholars will find here nothing new. In the second chapter, "La leyenda de Tristán en España," the editor takes up with much thoroughness the matter of allusions to Tristram, Iseult, and the whole Arthurian literature in early ballads, lyrics, and prose works. He adds not a little to what Menéndez y Pelayo had already written on the subject.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Northup, "The Italian Origin of the Spanish Prose Tristram Versions," *The Romanic Review*, Vol. III, pp. 194 ff.

*Libro del esforçado cauallero Don Tristan de Leonis y de sus grandes fechos en armas* (reprinted from the edition of Valladolid, 1501, edited by Bonilla y San Martín, Sociedad de bibliófilos madrileños, Madrid, 1912).

<sup>2</sup> *Nueva bib. de aut. esp.*, Vol. VI, *Libros de caballerías* (ed. Bonilla y San Martín, Madrid, 1907).

<sup>3</sup> Menéndez y Pelayo, *Nueva bib. de aut. esp.*, Vol. I, *Orígenes de la novela* (Madrid, 1905), pp. clxix ff.

The conclusion that the allusions to Tristram in the early literature do not point to the prose romance that we know seems to be just. Bonilla is also correct in his opinion that the *Amadís de Gaula* is largely influenced by this romance which was first printed seven years earlier than Montalvo's Zaragoza edition of 1508. But the matter is here merely touched upon, and one could wish a more detailed study than either Bonilla or Miss Williams has made upon this point.

The chief question raised by the publication of this early romance of chivalry, and that which most concerns students of Arthurian literature is this: What is the relation of the *Tristán de Leonís* to the French Prose Romance and the various versions of it preserved in the Italian and other European vernaculars? This question Bonilla attempts to answer in his third chapter: "El Tristán castellano—sus fuentes." And here it is the writer's unpleasant duty to point out a capital fault in Bonilla's method, a defect so serious that it vitiates many of his conclusions and leads him into errors which might easily have been avoided. That fault is this: Bonilla has now twice edited this romance wholly without reference to the Vatican Tristram, a MS closely related, older, and in many respects more authentic. Thus to edit and annotate a text was bad enough; for the Vatican MS would have afforded a ready solution to many points which have perplexed him. But such a lack of scholarly conscience is doubly inexcusable in one who, like Bonilla, undertakes to solve complicated questions of source and manuscript relationship. He has in his possession a copy of the manuscript referred to.<sup>1</sup> This manuscript is the key to the question he attempts to solve; and yet he deliberately makes no use of it. Bonilla has faithfully exploited Curdy's bibliography. His footnotes teem with learned allusions to Bérout, Thomas, Gottfried von Strassburg, Eilhard von Oberg, the English *Sir Tristrem*, etc. Why has he gone so far afield for material while neglecting beyond the briefest mention the only other extensive Tristram version in his own language when a copy of that text was in his possession at the time?

First of all Bonilla makes the misleading statement that Vatican 6428 represents a version different from that which he is editing.

<sup>1</sup> Bonilla, *Tristán de Leonís*, p., xxxvii, note.

From this an uninitiated reader might infer that any comparison of the two versions was superfluous. It is true that the Vatican (V) and *Tristán de Leontís* (TL) are without much doubt independent translations and differ absolutely as to language; but, on the other hand they coincide very closely as regards both subject-matter and the order in which the various incidents are narrated. They are related intimately. Neither can V be studied apart from TL nor TL apart from V without disastrous result. After having disposed of the Vatican MS with the briefest of mention (six lines of text and five of notes) Bonilla proceeds to compare TL with the French MSS as analyzed by Löseth.<sup>1</sup> The first conclusion reached is obvious and unassailable: that TL coincides with none of the known French texts. Don Adolfo is apparently unaware that Baist had reached the same conclusion some years ago.<sup>2</sup> To support this conclusion Bonilla next proceeds to instance 24 peculiar traits found in TL and lacking in the French. Of course, he cites only a few of the more salient points. He might have instanced many more. Now it may well be asked, would it not have been illuminating if Bonilla had pointed out that of the 24 traits instanced V shares 21, those lettered: A, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, Q, R, RR, S, T, U, V? And was this not also the place to indicate that nearly all these same peculiarities are to be found in some or all of the MSS belonging to the Italian group? Owing to his failure to indicate these facts the uncritical reader will form the opinion that TL is a version almost unique in its peculiarities, which is far from being the fact.

Bonilla has not, to be sure, utterly neglected to notice certain peculiarities which the *Tavola Ritonda* and the *Tristano Riccardiano* have in common with TL. But his discussion of this matter is most summary. He calls attention to only a few of the distinctive traits which the Italian and Spanish versions have in common in opposition to the French, leaving upon the reader's mind the impression that the similarity between these texts is not very great after all. Had Bonilla not avoided the weeks of drudgery necessary to make a thorough comparison of the long texts in question, he might have pointed out hundreds of common traits whereas he has indicated only

<sup>1</sup> Löseth, *Le roman en prose de Tristan*, etc. (Paris, 1890).

<sup>2</sup> Baist, "Die spanische Litteratur," *Gröbers Grundriss*, III, 5, p. 438.

a scant dozen. And had he realized the full importance of the Vatican MS and carefully collated all four versions, he would not so have underestimated the importance of the Italian redactions. Because the similarity between the Riccardiano (R) and V is even more apparent than is that of R and TL. TL, as a later text which was revised for the press, has undergone far more revision than V. The many MSS closely related to R are not so much as mentioned. Yet one of these, Panciatichiano 33 (P), in the opinion of the present writer, stands in a very close relationship to the Spanish versions.

What then are Bonilla's opinions with regard to the source of TL? He agrees with Baist and the present writer in saying that TL is unlike any one of the existing French versions. He agrees with me also in discrediting the statement found in the Prologue of TL to the effect that it was translated from the French of Philippe Camus.<sup>1</sup> He admits that two (but why two only?) of the Italian versions offer striking points of similarity with the Spanish when the latter diverge from the French models, though the superficiality of his investigations has kept him from realizing the full import of their agreement. But having admitted this, he claims most illogically that TL descends directly from the French (whose extant texts it does not resemble) rather than from the Italian (whose extant texts it resembles very closely). To account for even the few similarities he has found between Spanish and Italian he is forced to posit a French "model" (he avoids the term source) from which both Spanish and Italian versions were copied. I submit that such a theory is less plausible than my own: that the two Spanish versions spring directly from lost Italian originals closely akin to those preserved. In the first place the mere fact that one of the Spanish versions has been preserved in an Italian library in itself creates a presumption that there was some interchange of Tristram MSS between Italy and Spain. Many of the peculiarities common to both Italian and Spanish are errors made in the process of translation. Would an Italian and a Spaniard, rendering out of the same French MS or related French MSS, each independently into his own vernacular, make identical errors? In my former study I have shown that, as a whole, the Italian versions are more faithful to the French than are the Spanish.

<sup>1</sup> Bonilla, *op. cit.*, pp. 387 ff.

Lastly a few forms which appear to be Italianisms have crept into the Spanish versions.

Another proof of Italian origin, which I have not previously used, is the fact that where the Spanish versions V and TL disagree a reason for the disagreement may sometimes be found in the Italian versions. That is to say, V will coincide in a mistake with one group of Italian MSS, TL with another. Thus, R and V agree in substituting Godoine for the Andret of the French, whereas the Tavola Ritonda (S) and TL incline toward Andret. Nevertheless, TL and one MS of S show the same substitution of Godoine on the single occasion when this variously styled traitor is first introduced. Again, in P and V, Tristram ends a duel, by himself asking the Lady of the Thorn to settle the dispute. Now TL agrees with three other Italian MSS, S, F, L, where Tristram's opponent Blanore makes the suggestion instead of Tristram. When Tristram is about to fight a duel with Morhout, Gaheriet intercedes for Tristram in V and R. The trait is omitted in TL and S. R and V omit the prayer which Brangen makes when about to be killed by the serfs; S and TL have it. R has *Lamoratto di Gaunes*, corresponding to *Lamarad de Gaones* in TL; V has *de Gales* corresponding to *Di Gaules* of P. When Tristram fights with *Lamarad* and his cousin, R and V agree in making the first fight to be between Tristram and his cousin. In TL and S, Tristram first fights with *Lamarad* and afterward with the cousin. These few instances out of many will, I think, make clear my point that discrepancies between the Spanish versions often correspond to identical discrepancies within the Italian group.

I now desire to take up a few points which have given Bonilla difficulty in the present edition and to indicate how easily they may be accounted for on the theory of a direct Italian origin.

1. Bonilla shows that where the French versions have the name *Felix*, TL has *Felipe*. Now was it not easier to derive *Felipe* from Italian *Felice* than directly from *Felix*? Bonilla does not attempt to explain the name *Desierto De Fecilate*. I suspect that this last word represents Italian *Felicitate*. MS P shows the same metathesis of *c* and *l* when it gives *Fecile* as a variant of *Felice*.

2. Bonilla seems to connect Giosa Guarda with the Galician *goyosa*.<sup>1</sup> I submit that my explanation is the more plausible—that it represents a shortening of Italian *Gioiosa*.

3. The proper name Echides puzzles Bonilla. He notes that R substitutes Ghedin for the French Andret and mentions the variant Kedin, failing to notice much closer Italian variants such as Ghidin, Ghedis, Chedin. In V we have Godis. Thus in two closely related Spanish texts we have a *g* in the one name corresponding to a *ch* in the other. Now such an interchange (graphic rather than phonetic) existed in the cortonese-umbro dialect MSS in which R and some of the other variant MSS are written. I refrain from giving similar instances in a host of other proper names.

4. Bonilla compares a passage from French MS 103 to prove that at that point the author of the Spanish version was not translating but arranging freely.<sup>2</sup> If instead of this one comparison, the reader will take the trouble to compare this passage with the corresponding passages in V and the various Italian versions, he will obtain evidence that many of the traits in the TL passage have their analogues in the other versions and that the scribe who wrote TL while he may not have translated literally was at least not inventing.

5. Bonilla calls attention to the fact that in the French the serfs commissioned to slay Brangen kill a dog and dip her garments in its blood. In TL they slay instead a *cabrón*; in V, a *cabrito*. In the Italian (R) they kill a beast, what kind is unspecified. This trait is illustrative of a principle which applies in scores of other cases: that where there is a marked difference between French and Spanish, the Italian offers an intermediary stage.

Bonilla has not failed to perceive that Rusticien de Pise is also a source for a small portion of TL. In his final statement regarding the source of TL he advances two possibilities: (a) that there were two sources, (1) a French version of the first part of the Prose Romance of Tristram, and (2) Rusticien de Pise; (b) that the Spanish translator utilized a French source in which the work of Rusticien was already incorporated.

<sup>1</sup> Bonilla, *op. cit.*, p. xxviii, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. liv.

The present writer believes, on the contrary, that the Spanish translator of TL had as his source an Italian version of the prose romance in which the work of Rusticien was already incorporated. Bonilla has failed to notice that such a union of the two sources obtains in the case of the *Tristano di Viena*, one of the important MSS of the Italian group. To support his view he says:<sup>1</sup> "Apparently the compiler of the Riccardiano did not know the compilation of Rusticien de Pise." But by neglecting to inform the reader that R is a fragment he produces a wrong impression. The missing conclusion of R may or may not have drawn from Rusticien like TL and the *Tristano di Viena*. I have previously noted one form, taken from the latter part of TL, which adds to my belief that that portion, too, is of Italian origin: Vercepon (TL) corresponding to Verzeppo (P) and Verzeppo, Verzeppe (S) instead of the correct French form Louvezerp, Lonnezerp, etc.

In conclusion I will say that the analogies which Bonilla has noted between R and TL and which he styles *extraordinariamente curiosas* are not curious at all, but wholly natural, to one who accepts my view that V and TL are directly derived from the Italian. They are indeed extraordinary if one holds with Bonilla that the direct source was French. We may expect new light on this subject when Bonilla publishes his eagerly awaited "History of the Romances of Chivalry." The writer is confident that a fuller study of the related versions will compel him materially to alter his views.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lviii.